



ORIENTAL NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

Secretary General
Nicholas Rhodes
28 Napier Gardens, Hythe
Kent CT21 6DD, U.K.

U.K. & Eire: Mr. P. Smith
9 Grandison Road, London SW11 6LS, U.K.
E-mail: pnsmith755@aol.com

Newsletter Editor:
Mr. S. Goron,
74 Outram Road, Croydon,
Surrey, CR0 6XF, U.K.
e-mail: s.goron@blueyonder.co.uk

America: Mr. C. Karukstis
P.O. Box 1528, Claremont,
CA 91711, U.S.A.
e-mail: charlie@charliek.com

South Asia: Farokh Todywalla,
80 Todywalla House, Ardeshir Dady Street,
Khetwadi - Bombay 400 004, India

Regional Secretaries:

General: Mr. R. Senior,
Butleigh Court Tower, Butleigh,
Glastonbury, Soms, BA6 8SA, U.K.

Pakistan Chapter: Mr. S. M. Mirza,
2-98-E Panorama Centre, Blue Area,
Islamabad, Pakistan.
e-mail: shafqatmirza@hotmail.com

Europe: Mr. J. Lingen,
Dr. A. Schweitzerstr. 29,
2861 XZ Bergambacht, Netherlands.
E-mail: lingen@wxs.nl

Annual Subscription:
£15, €25, \$30.

Website: www.onsumis.org

NEWSLETTER

No. 185

Autumn 2005

ISSN 1813-0364

Articles

The First Documentary Evidence for Qara Qorum, from the Year 635/1237-8

By Stefan Heidemann

Qara Qorum was the centre of the Mongolian empire. The history of its foundation is clouded by contradictory evidence. All information has come either from later memorial inscriptions or from chronicles written at least decades after the events at different places. Some sources date the origin of the city back to the year 1220. The reason for this early dating lies probably more in the desire to trace the foundation of the imperial centre back to the divine Chinggis Khan.

The earliest dated primary documentary evidence for the existence of Qara Qorum has now been found. It is a silver coin with the mint name Qarah Qorum (QRH QRM) and struck in the year (6)35 H./1237-8 AD. It is, moreover, the first identified coin of this mint. The date is about two years after the supposed construction works of Ögedai. The Yuanshi reports under the year 1235 that, in spring, the emperor, Ögedai, fortified Qorum and built his famous Wan-An Palace. The mint was probably located in the palace compound. The workshop seems to have been under the control of the Muslim community at the court or in the market.



The coin was found during excavations by the Mongolian Academy of Science and Bonn University/Germany starting in 2000, now under the direction of Uambajaar Erdenabat, Ulaan Baatar, and Ernst Pohl, Bonn. It came from a coppersmith's workshop located in the Chinese commercial district. An analysis of this coin will be published in "Beiträge zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Archäologie" (in print). The author would be grateful for any further information about coins with the mintname Qorum (QRM) or Qarah Qorum (QRH QRM).

Presently an exhibition in the "Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland" in Bonn is displaying the cultural achievements of the Mongol empire: Dschingis Khan und seine Erben – Das Weltreich der Mongolen¹. A section on coins is included.